

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Royal Gorge Field Office
3028 E. Main Street
Canon City, CO 81212**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-053 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Iron Mountain Firewood Sales

PLANNING UNIT: Grape Creek Sub-Region #7

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Colorado, Fremont County, Sixth Principle Meridian, T. 19 S., R. 72 W., sec. 32, Tract 47.*

*Tract 40 has a total of 480 acres in which 40 acres is in conflict with Tract 44B; 199.97 Acres is in Conflict with Tract 44C and 0.03 acres is in Conflict with Tract 47 (see realty section in remarks).

APPLICANT: BLM

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION The Iron Mountain Firewood Sales project area is located approximately 1 mile west of Iron Mountain at the top of Copper Gulch (See vicinity map) in Fremont County. The forest types found in the project area are ponderosa pine, pinyon pine and Rocky Mountain juniper. The forest condition can be characterized as fairly dense with a closing canopy which is leading to a decline in the understory plants. There are also small meadows in the project area that are being encroached upon by trees.

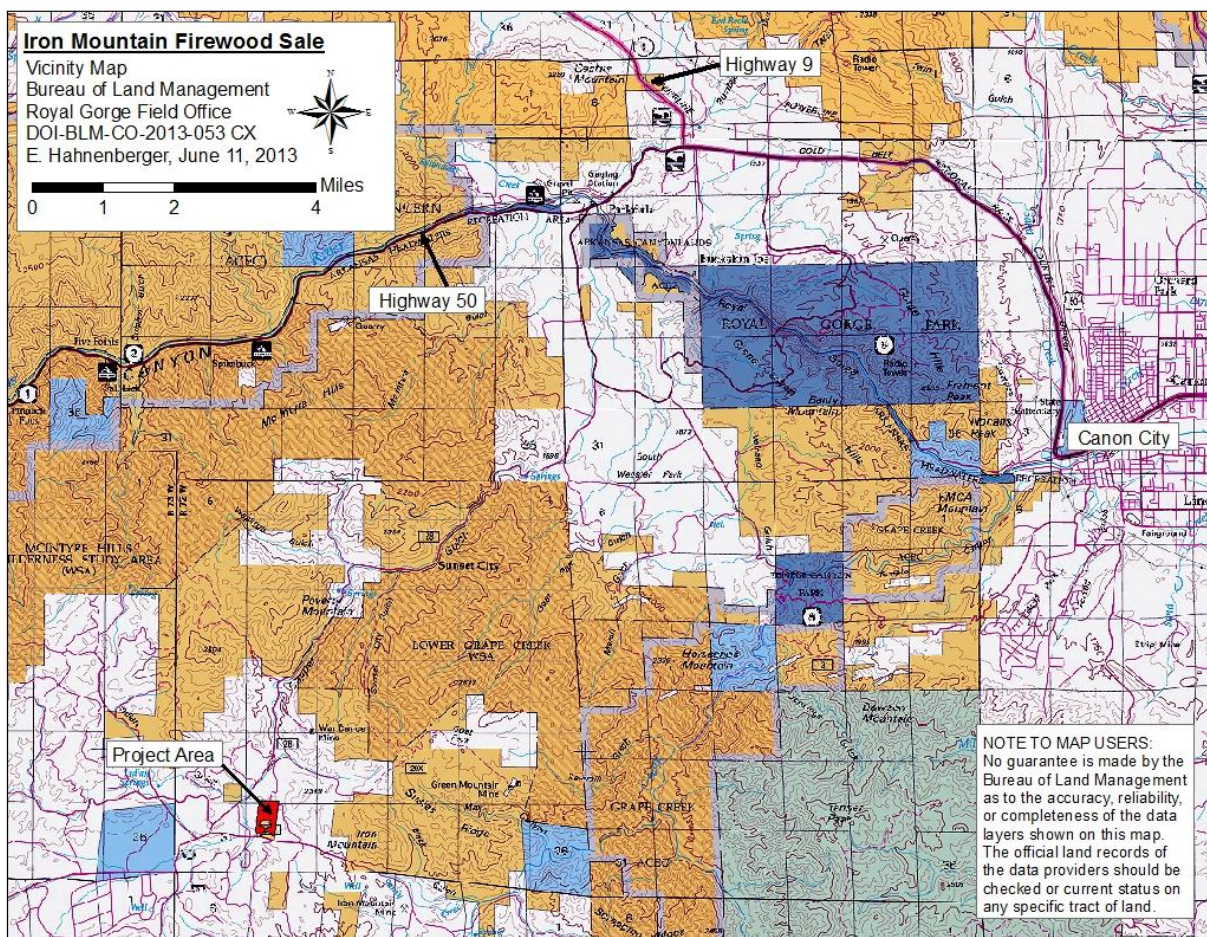
The proposed action is to thin dense forests and remove trees in areas identified for meadow restoration on 65 acres. This action would improve forest health by reducing tree densities and promoting fire resilient species, reduce fuels, improve understory plant vigor which provide forage for wildlife and cattle, improve wildlife habitat by restoring meadows and provide a desired forest product to local residents.

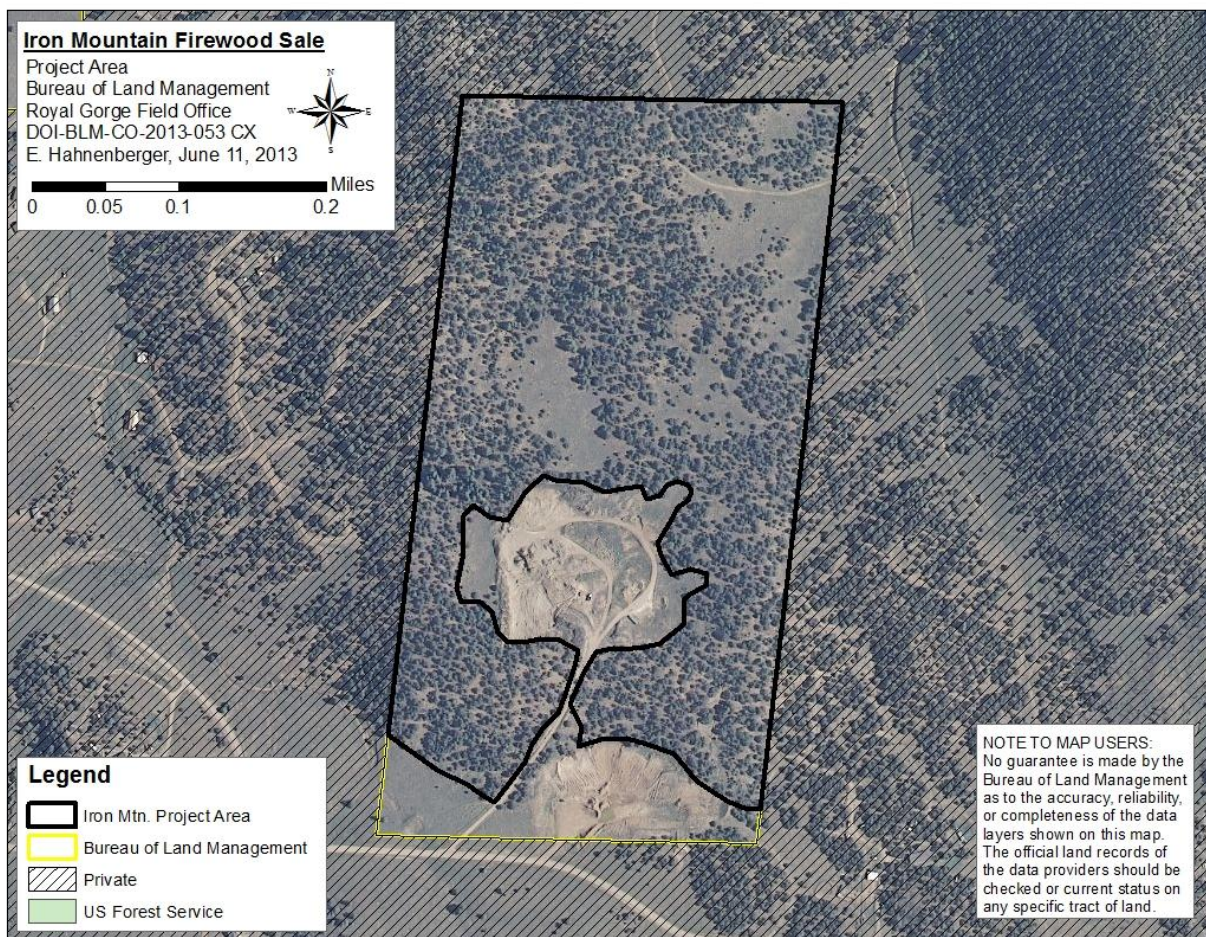
An estimate of 1-6 cords per acre of firewood would be harvested varying by acre. Live green trees would be thinned to a 20 to 40 foot variable spacing with a majority of the ponderosa pine protected as reserves. A representation of all tree species and ages found in the project area shall be reserved to maintain forest diversity. Access into the project is by county road and the gravel pit road. The access to the firewood would be by temporary roads which would be closed to vehicles once the harvest is completed. The work would be completed with chainsaws, small tractors, pickup trucks, and trailers on slopes less than 35%. Any small tractors or skid-steers would be cleaned and

inspected prior to moving the equipment onto the project area. Access points shall be monitored during and after project completion to ensure no new roads develop.

All live trees and snags with visible wildlife use would be protected reserves. Slash shall be piled in a size a minimum of 6 X 6 foot in size. Piles will either be burned under ideal conditions or left for wildlife habitat. Highly disturbed areas will be seeded with native seed and monitored for noxious weeds upon completion of the project.

The area is currently unallotted for cattle grazing. All BLM approved existing fences, property corners and other improvements shall be protected.





PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Area Approved Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 05/13/1996

Decision Number: 7-1, 7-14, 7-15

Decision Language: Vegetation management will be as follows: vegetation will be managed to accomplish other BLM initiatives i.e., riparian, wildlife, etc.; management of forest lands will be for enhancement of other values. Productive forested lands will be managed for sustained yield. A portion of the forested lands will be available for intensive management.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11.9 (C.7). None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 6/17/2013
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	NA
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	NA
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland, Weeds	JL, 06/15/2013
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 06/17/2013
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 07/17/2013
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	-----
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 6/27/13
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	MW for TY 8/12
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 6/28/2013
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 6/26/2013
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	NA
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	6/10/2013
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics	mw, 6/13/13
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	NA
Michael Troyer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MDT 7/8/2013
Vera Matthews	Realty Specialist	Realty	VM 7/9/2013
Steve Craddock	Realty Specialist	Realty	NA
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	NA
Bob Hurley	Fire Management Officer	Fire Management	BH, 6/14/2013

REMARKS:

Cadastral: This parcel of BLM was surveyed in 1981. These monuments establish the public lands boundary for Tract 47. These monuments should be located and protected before work begins.

Cultural Resources: Although cultural resources were found near the area of potential affect [see report CR-RG-13-056 (P)], no sites determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were found. Therefore, the proposed project will have no impact on any historic properties (those eligible for the NRHP).

Native American Religious Concerns: No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

Migratory Birds: To be in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and USFWS required by Executive Order 13186, BLM must avoid actions, where possible, that result in a “take” of migratory birds. Pursuant to BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-050, to reduce impacts to Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC), no habitat disturbance (removal of vegetation such as timber, brush, or grass) is allowed during the periods of May 15 - July 15, the breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds. The provision will not apply to completion activities in disturbed areas that were initiated prior to May 15 and continue into the 60-day period.



July 10, 2013

CAUTION:
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and boundary lines may have positional error due to source data.

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Colorado, Fremont County,
6PM, T. 19 S., R. 72 W.,
sec. 32, Tract 47.*

(Conflict*) Tract 40 has a total of
480 acres in which 40 acres is in
conflict with Tract 44B; 199.97
Acres is in Conflict with Tract 44C
and 0.03 acres is in Conflict with Tract 47.

There is a conflict in the cadastral tract survey, the conflict area is identified as BLM, however there is a private interest. There is no adverse possession against the US government; however

this was a cadastral overlap, and may have color of title rights. There has not been a resolution to the conflict, it is only documented.

Lands and Realty Mitigation: The conflict area as indicated on the map will be avoided.

Minerals: There is currently two authorized mineral material sites in the vicinity of this proposal. No access within or through these sites can occur without prior coordination with the authorized officer and operator of the quarry.

Forestry: The RGFO will reserve the right to impose additional timing restrictions based on concerns related to bark beetle infestations. When possible, work in pinyon/juniper forest type will take place between September 1st and April 1st to avoid the Ips bark beetle flight period, avoiding increased beetle activity within and adjacent to treatment areas.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics: The project is located in a parcel that does not meet the criteria for having wilderness characteristics.

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: If the project involves oil or fuel usage, transfer or storage, an adequate spill kit and shovels are required to be onsite during project implementation. The project proponent will be responsible for adhering to all applicable local, State and Federal regulations in the event of a spill, which includes following the proper notification procedures in BLM's Spill Contingency Plan.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: Ken Reed

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Melissa K.S. Garcia

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 11/5/13

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Keith E. Berger
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 11/5/13